Macmillan Government Faces First Popularity Test of 1963

London — (UPI) — Prime Minister Harold Macmillan's Conservative government faces its first popularity test of 1963 this Thursday in a by-election that will give a clue to whether it is still in favor with the voters.

The result of the voting at Colne Valley, a traditionally Labor-party-held constituency in the northern hills of Yorkshire, may provide a pointer to Macmillan as to the date he will call the next general election. General elections must be held before October, 1964.

In a series of by-elections last year the Conservatives fared badly, losing two seats to Labor and one to the Liberals. Recent public opinion polls have indicated that the government, battling to stall off an economic crisis, is still behind Labor in the popularity ratings.

Save Themselves

The crucial test for the Conservatives at Colne Valley is not whether they win, but whether they manage to save themselves from coming in a humiliating last.

There is no threat to their position in the present Parliament, in which their majority is still nearly 100.

In the 1959 general election in Colne Valley the Labor candidate won by 6,000 votes over his Conservative opponent. The Conservative, in turn, was 2,000 votes ahead of the Liberal candidate in the by-election.

If Labor manages to increase its majority, or if the Liberals poll strongly — some tipsters think the Liberals might do well — it is reasonable to believe that the Macmillan government will abandon any thoughts it might have of calling suddenly for general elections this spring.

Spark Speculation

On the other hand, should the Conservatives do well at Colne Valley, and in two other by-elections to follow a week later in Rotherham and Swansea East (also Labor-held seats), it would certainly spark speculation about an early election.

Political circles think the chances of a strong Conservative showing in Colne Valley are small. The seat has never been held by the Conservatives, and has been in Labor's hands since 1931. Earlier in the century the constituents elected a Liberal.

For the first time in 18 months the Conservatives are fighting a seat without British entry to the Common Market as an issue. Domestic matters are paramount.

Unemployment in the country is still high, although not particularly bad in the Colne Valley constituency itself. But there is general concern about such matters as shortage of housing, rising property taxes and food prices.

Pumping Money

The government is known to believe that conditions will improve soon. It is pumping money into the economy to keep it moving.

Political sources say, however, that the government is worried that a continuation of last year's run of by-election setbacks might have a chain reaction effect and trigger off further defeats later in the year even if the economic situation gets better.

Both the Labor and Liberal parties have made a big pre-election effort in Colne Valley. The Liberals claim they are better placed now than in 1959.

The Liberal candidate, R. S. Wainwright, is a 44-year-old local accountant who fought for the seat in 1959 and has been campaigning for it ever since. An important element in his favor is that he is a Methodist lay minister. The town and the valleys around it have a staunch Methodist tradition.

The Labor candidate, A. E. P. Duffy, 42, is a lecturer in economics at nearby Leeds university.

The Conservative candidate is an enthusiastic 27-year-old journalist, Andrew Alexander, who works for a Yorkshire paper.

There is one other candidate, Independent Arthur Fox. He is a 54-year-old Manchester night club owner, and he's standing for Parliament as a protest against legislation he considers outdated.

Fox took two strip-tease girls from his club along with him when he presented his nomination papers. The girls have appeared at his campaign meetings.

But Colne Valley, with its chapels and dour Yorkshire outlook has shown him scant sympathy. Even whistling at the girls has been more derisive than appreciative.

Straps and Color New Features in Shoes for Girls

Leathers are light, colors are gay and styling airy, in girls' dress, school and play shoes for spring.

Stepping out at the head of the fashion parade are strap pumps, reports Shoe Fashion Service of Leather Industries of America. The simple T-strap and the broad sabot strap play a lesser role.

Girls can be ankle-deep in strap fashions in grained and smooth leather school shoes, in brushed and glove leather casuals and in polished and patent leather dress shoes.

Light Trend

The trend to lightness has increased the popularity of brushed leather flats, ties and boot shoes. Brushed leather is a sueded finish on split leather which has been thinned down for extra lightness, with no loss in durability. Split leather is strong enough to be used as a sole in some casual or play shoes for youngsters.

In both casual and school shoes the classic moccasin is enjoying renewed popularity. Although available in dozens of style variations, the moccasin most often selected by youngsters is the classic with simple handstitching and a strap design across the vamp.

Party Shoes

For dress or party, the low-cut shell pump in a handsome leather finish makes every social occasion a full-dress affair. There are laced pumps in rounded or square toes, slip-on pumps in multi-colored leathers, and strap shoes with a real open feeling.

Pastels—yellows, blues and pinks—are interpreted in soft smooth leathers. Flashing patent and glazed kid leathers also star on the birthday circuit.

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